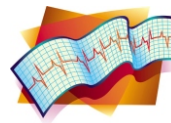


# "The Pulse"



Volume I Issue I

The Premier Issue

Summer 2006



## How It All Started

By Renée Prather-Hairston  
North Carolina A&T State University

Andria Barbee, Special Projects Coordinator, joined the Department of Health in June 2000, and was given the responsibility of revamping the Student Intern Program. Since her incumbency, more than 700 students have benefitted from the program. This includes paid, non-paid and course-credit students. They all come from various colleges, universities, ethnic backgrounds, educational levels and disciplines.

Her strong passion for youth and students, along with her vision for success, has greatly enriched the structure of the program. Barbee has exceeded even the highest expectations by making herself accessible. She isn't just a manager, but a friend, mother and coach. When asked why she is so dedicated to helping young adults Barbee

responded, "Because I was once a student and someone helped me. I was once a young adult in the same situation most of my interns are in today and someone took the time to groom, mentor and provide me with skills and experience to become the professional I am today".



*"The Department of Health is an excellent proving ground for students interested in public health careers. We are grooming the next generation of healthcare professionals."*

Gregg A. Pane, M.D.  
Director, DC Department of Health

Barbee independently runs the entire student intern program with the assistance of a part-time intern, Nekia Jordan, while performing the following

duties: recruiting students, marketing the program to colleges and universities and posting student information on the DOH website. She screens resumes, interviews candidates, fills paid and non-paid internships, schedules orientations and completes intern time sheets. Barbee also, conducts site visits, mid-term evaluations student placements, and schedules meetings with managers. She intervenes when necessary to reassign students, meets periodically with school counselors and composes letters of recommendation.

Andria Barbee is driven by her desire to serve and help others. She is committed to assisting students in achieving their scholastic and professional aptitude by giving guidance and access to all resources. It is because of this dedication to excellence and vision for success that the Student Intern Program thrives.

## Getting Acquainted

By Renée Prather-Hairston  
North Carolina A&T State University

What a time we had! The student intern breakfast was a huge success with esteemed speakers Gregg A. Pane, M.D., Director of the Department of Health, and Jo Ellen Gray, PhD, Human Resources Manager. Their encouraging words were an inspiration to all who attended. The theme of the event was "Let's Get Acquainted" hosted by Ashley Davis, student intern for the Emergency

Health and Medical Services Administration (EHMSA). This event allowed us to connect with our peers who attended school in the same location and had similar minors or majors. The interns played an intricate role in the coordination and preparation for the breakfast.

Accept students from all over the nation year round.

You can find additional internships at [www.dchealth.dc.gov](http://www.dchealth.dc.gov)



Dr. Pane speaking at the intern breakfast.

## Access Granted

By Kristin R. Johnson  
PG Community College

Each year, college students at various levels of education leave their respective schools and venture into the real world for a highly coveted position-an internship. The District of Columbia Department of Health (DOH) is one of many agencies that

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## America's Most Wanted

STUDENT INTERNS BOUND TO RETURN

By Ashley Davis  
Florida A&M

America may want them but DOH has them—interns that is. Some of the best and the brightest students from across the country apply, and are accepted into the DC Department of Health's Student Intern Program. This summer DOH has placed approximately 70 interns within various program areas throughout the District of Columbia. So what keeps them coming back? When asked, Zusi Airhiavbre of Howard University, said flexibility is what brings him back to DOH "It [DOH] is close to campus and works well with my class schedule and other school activities, he said." Zusi

may have more practical reasons for returning to DOH's intern program; however Jafreisy Nunez De La Cruz has other reasons. Jafreisy is a student



*"I feel like a totally different person from when I first started this internship."*

-Jafreisy Nunez De La Cruz

at the University of the District Columbia. She says she keeps coming

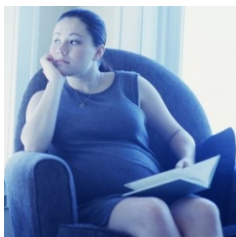
back to DOH because of her challenging assignments which cause her to step out of her comfort zone. "I feel like a totally different person from when I first started this internship."

Let the record show that the interns at DOH are doing big things. They are learning, networking and building bridges that will carry them over to the next step in their destination. Interns are bound to return when they get a glimpse of what DOH has to offer.

## Join the Fight: Preventing Teens from Repeated Pregnancies

By Tamarah Moss-Knight  
Howard University, MPH

The Maternal and Family Health Administration (MFHA) of the District of Columbia Department of Health established Teen



Mothers Take Charge (TMTC) in 2001 to assist adolescent mothers in meeting Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) requirements and prepare for economic independence, as

well as improve maternal and child health outcomes. The program has assisted 700 teen mothers and their families in the District of Columbia to postpone repeated pregnancies, cultivate positive parenting skills, and strive for personal responsibility and self-sufficiency.

Participants of TMTC are female adolescents who are nineteen (19) years of age or younger, and are pregnant or currently parenting a child/children that is 3 years of age or younger. The main goals of TMTC are to: encourage healthy pregnancy outcomes, postpone further pregnancies, maintain participation in,

and connection with education and/or training programs, and increase paternity establishment and male involvement.

TMTC has done a wonderful job. Since 2001, TMTC has had only two repeated pregnancies among the 700 teen mothers and families served, but funding continues to diminish. To find out ways you can support TMTC and for more information, please contact Annis Bishop, Program Specialist at telephone: (202) 442-9364 or E-mail: [annis.bishop@dc.gov](mailto:annis.bishop@dc.gov)

## Oral Cancer: The Silent Epidemic

By Kwame Agbottah  
Morehouse College

"Prevention is better than a cure." This quotation seems self-evident on the surface, but it is easier said than done. Oral health and oral cancer are major concerns among minorities in the Washington DC area. There are many factors that lead to the infiltration of these disparities, for example, socioeconomic status, access to preventive care and excess usage of damaging carcinogens (i.e. alcohol and tobacco). According to the American Dental Association Foundation, children begin smoking at the age of fourteen and should begin learning the importance of

oral hygiene at approximately seven years of age. If we instill the importance of avoiding the habits that lead to oral cancer as well as good oral hygiene in this particular age group then, in time, the average oral cancer rates and overall oral health problem should make a significant decline.

According to the American Cancer Society, lack of proper oral hygiene as well as tobacco use (cigarettes, pipes, cigars, chewing tobacco, and snuff) is a major cause of oral cancer. Combining tobacco use with heavy drinking can also foster the development of oral cancer. While oral cancer is a multi-cultural plague, African-Americans are the higher

percentage of those infected with a 2:1 ratio compared to Caucasians. The survival rate after diagnosis is

33% for Blacks in comparison to 55% for Whites. Statistics show that this is due to the income levels, education, availability of proper healthcare, and socio-economic status of Blacks. Now that we have the facts and have addressed the problem, it is our duty to combat this issue.





## HIV/AIDS

### ***HIV Is A Virus That Does Not Discriminate By Age, Gender, Race, Or Sexual Orientation. HIV Can Infect Anyone!***

By Allyson Goodwin  
American University

There are four ways in which you can contract HIV (human immunodeficiency virus):

1. Having unprotected sex (which includes oral, anal, and vaginal forms of sex)
2. Sharing needles (usually a result of doing drugs)
3. Blood Transfusions / Sharing of Blood
4. Breast Milk

And the reason HIV is transferred from person to person in these four ways is because HIV is passed only through bodily fluids and therefore the only way you can contract HIV is through these four methods.

#### **Campaign Imperatives: Why the District Initiated the HIV Screening Campaign**

- In 2006, more than 1 million persons are living with HIV/AIDS in the United States, and an estimated 40,000 new HIV infections are expected to occur this year.
- 5 percent of Americans infected with HIV (about 250,000) are unaware of their HIV sero-status.
- For individuals who don't know they are HIV positive, testing is the gateway to lifesaving treatment that results in longer, healthier and more productive lives.
- Persons who know they are infected with HIV are also more likely to take steps to prevent themselves from transmitting the virus to others.
- In 2004, the District had the highest AIDS case rate (179.2 per 100,000 populations) among US cities with populations over 500,000.
- The DC Department of Health estimates that between 17,806 and 25,405 people are living with HIV in the District of Columbia.
- The campaign brings heightened

focus and attention to a major public health crisis in the District of Columbia.

#### **Know Your Status!**

The Ora Quick rapid testing kit can painlessly and rapidly test your HIV status. It takes only 20 minutes to complete the test and you can use saliva from your mouth to test for the virus. The Administration for HIV Policy and Programs is sponsoring a District wide testing campaign that will end on December 31, 2006 which encourages people between the ages of 14 and 84 to know their HIV status by taking the Ora Quick test. There are several locations in which people in the District can be tested and you do not have to live in the District to be tested. The test is free and can quickly end worries about whether or not you are infected with the virus. HIV / AIDS is a serious epidemic especially in the District of Columbia so it is important that everyone know their status and does not pass on the virus to other people.



Come Together DC Get Screened for HIV: DO YOU KNOW YOUR STATUS?

## Food 4 Thought

By Ashley Davis  
Florida A&M



Just like underwear, one size does not fit all and that is just the idea behind the new food nutrition pyramid. In 2005, the United States Department of Agriculture has redesigned and reissued the guidelines of the nutrition food pyramid program. This new and improved system was designed with the idea that each person is different and there should be a food pyramid that is designed with a person's individuality in mind. Each color on the pyramid represents a different food group. Orange is grains, green is vegetables, red is fruits, blue is dairy, purple is meats and beans, and the thin

yellow line represent fats and oils. Eating from all different food groups is not all that is needed for a healthy diet and balanced nutrition. The person climbing up the stairs located on the side of the pyramid is there to remind us that daily exercise is as important as a healthy diet. So log on to **mypyramid.gov** to receive your personal food pyramid that is based on your age, gender and activity level to instruct you on the proper foods to eat and in what moderation you should eat them. All of this and more is available on the website to help you make the right steps toward becoming a healthier you.

## Did You Know...

By Tiffney Greer  
Howard University, MS

Sickle Cell disease is the most common inherited disorder among African Americans in the United States. Approximately 375 African Americans are born with Sickle Cell disease each year. About 1 in 12 African Americans carries the gene (trait) for the disease. The mother and the father must carry the gene and pass it on to their child in order for the baby to have sickle cell disease. If both parents are carriers of the gene, there is a 25% chance that the child will inherit sickle cell disease.

Sickle Cell disease is an inherited blood disorder that changes normal, round red blood cells to sickle or crescent moon shaped cells. These sickle blood cells become stuck in the blood vessels during circulation

causing anemia (low amounts of red blood cells), severe pain, organ



A microscopic image of sickle cell

damage, and growth problems. Newborns are screened for Sickle Cell disease in most states at birth. Currently there is no cure and no effective treatments for Sickle Cell disease. Management of the disease consists of taking prescription pain

medication, antibiotics, hydroxyurea, and in extreme cases blood transfusions. The average life expectancy is usually in the mid-40s. The earlier one receives treatment, the better the outcome in most cases.

To learn more about Sickle Cell disease and support groups log on to these websites:

Sickle Cell Association of the National Capital Area, Inc. (SCANCA, Inc.)

<http://www.scanca.org/>

The March of Dimes

[http://www.marchofdimes.com/pnhc/c/4439\\_1221.asp](http://www.marchofdimes.com/pnhc/c/4439_1221.asp)

Office of Early Childhood Development Early Intervention Program Division  
717 14<sup>th</sup> Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20005  
(202) 727-5371

Listed below is a break-down of the approximate number of internships that the Department of Health has provided per term:

Student Internship (Term)	Number of Students Enrolled
Summer 2000 (Re-vamped Program)	40
Fall 2000	30
Spring 2001	45
Summer 2001	68
Fall 2001	33
Spring 2002	44
Summer 2002	62
Fall 2002	35
Spring 2003	46
Summer 2003	45
Fall 2003	31
Spring 2004	38
Summer 2004	43
Fall 2004	41
Spring 2005	38
Summer 2005	59
Fall 2005	34
Spring 2006	47
Summer 2006	72
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>851</b>

### The Pulse Intern Newsletter is published by the DC Department of Health.

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Government of the  
District of Columbia  
Anthony A. Williams, Mayor



## Thank you DOH: Hats off for a Job Well Done!

We, the interns, would like to personally thank the Department of Health for creating the Student Intern Program and giving us an avenue to gain valuable work experience and education collaboratively. We've enjoyed this learning experience and are ever indebted to your gratitude and expertise. We have accrued an infinite amount of knowledge, leadership and integrity as a result of this program. We wish much success for the interns and the program in following years.